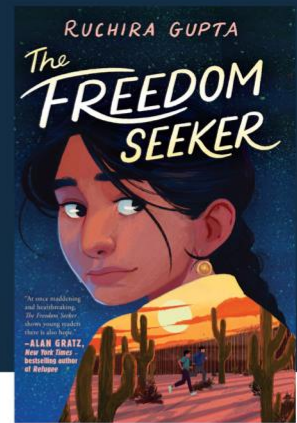


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AUTHOR ARTIST ACTIVIST

Resources for Readers from The Freedom Seeker



Resources for Readers of *The Freedom Seeker*

Thank you for reading *The Freedom Seeker*! Simi's journey takes her across borders, both physical and emotional, as she navigates challenges related to religious intolerance, immigration, human smugglers, family separation and a foreign country. The issues she faces are experienced by many people around the world today, and this resource page is here to help you learn more about these important topics—and find out what you can do to make a difference.

1. Understanding Religious Intolerance and Celebrating Diversity

In *The Freedom Seeker*, Simi's family faces challenges because her parents come from different religious backgrounds. They are targeted by people who don't accept their love because of religious intolerance. Religious intolerance happens when people don't respect others who have different beliefs, and it can lead to bullying, harassment, or even violence.

What Can You Do?

- **Ask Questions:** Don't be afraid to ask questions about different religions or beliefs. Understanding helps create respect.
- **Celebrate Diversity:** Learn about the different cultures and religions in your community. Try learning about the holidays your classmates or neighbors celebrate.
- **Stand Up for Others:** If you see someone being bullied because of their religion or background, speak up or tell a trusted adult. We can all help create a more inclusive environment by standing against intolerance.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Simi's family handle the bullying they face because of their different religions?
- Why do you think it's important to respect other people's beliefs?

Books & Movies to Explore:

- ***The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis:** A story about a girl in Afghanistan who must disguise herself as a boy to help her family survive under Taliban rule.
- ***Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai:** A powerful novel about a young Vietnamese girl adjusting to life in the U.S. after fleeing her home during the Vietnam War.
- ***Does My Head Look Big in This?* by Randa Abdel-Fattah:** A relatable story about a Muslim girl navigating identity and religious tolerance in high school while deciding to wear the hijab for the first time.
- ***The Faithful Spy* by John Hendrix:** A graphic novel about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor who stood up to religious intolerance during World War II.
- ***Ten Things I Hate About Me* by Randa Abdel-Fattah:** This book explores themes of interfaith relationships and identity struggles in a young girl hiding parts of her culture and religion from her classmates.
- ***Front Desk* by Kelly Yang**
- ***Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan**

2. Learning About Immigration and Refugees

When Simi and her mother leave India for the U.S., they face the challenges of immigration. People leave their homes and cross borders for many reasons—some are escaping violence or persecution, while others are searching for better opportunities. Simi and her mother, like many immigrants, must cross dangerous terrain (the desert) and place their trust in smugglers, who don't always tell the truth or keep them safe. Immigration can be very difficult, but it is also filled with hope for a better future.

What Is a Refugee?

A refugee is someone who leaves their home country because it is no longer safe for them to stay. They may flee because of war, natural disasters, or persecution for their race, religion, or beliefs. Like Simi and her mother, many refugees seek asylum in other countries, hoping to find safety and stability.

Challenges Migrants Face:

- **Crossing Borders:** Migrants often face dangerous conditions when trying to cross borders. Some, like Simi, have to cross deserts or rely on human smugglers, who can be untrustworthy.
- **Separation from Family:** Families are sometimes separated when they arrive in a new country, as Simi and her mother were. It can take a long time to reunite.
- **Detention Centers:** Many migrants are placed in detention centers while they wait to be processed. Conditions can be cold and harsh, as Simi experienced.

What Can You Do?

- **Learn About Immigrant Stories:** Ask family or friends if they know of anyone who has immigrated, or explore books and movies about migration.
- **Support Refugee Organizations:** You can help by supporting groups that work to assist immigrants and refugees.

Organizations That Help (just an indicative list as I want to add in some Arizona and Mexico orgs):

- **UNICEF:** Works to help children worldwide, including refugees.
 - **International Rescue Committee (IRC):** Provides support to refugees fleeing crisis.
 - **Kids in Need of Defense (KIND):** Offers legal help to unaccompanied migrant children in the U.S.
 - Women's Refugee Commission
-

3. How You Can Make a Difference

The Freedom Seeker is about standing up for what's right and finding the strength to keep going, even when times are tough. You can make a difference in your own community, just like Simi learns to do in the book.

Acts of Kindness:

- **Welcome Newcomers:** If you know someone new to your school or neighborhood, make them feel welcome by saying hello or inviting them to join your group.
- **Learn About New Cultures:** Take the time to learn about the cultures of people around you. Ask questions, show interest, and celebrate differences.
- **Stand Up for Others:** Whether it's bullying at school or seeing someone treated unfairly, standing up for others is one of the most important ways to show kindness.

What Projects Can You Do?

- **Hold a Donation Drive:** Work with your school or community to collect donations for refugee families in need.
- **Create a "Welcome to Our Community" Kit:** Help new families by creating kits with helpful information and resources about your town, like maps, important phone numbers, and local attractions.
- **Write Letters of Support:** Work with your class to write letters to organizations that help refugees or immigrants, showing your support.

Get Inspired:

- **Watch:** PBS Kids has great videos about kids who have immigrated to new countries and their experiences.

- **Read:** Explore books like *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang or *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan, both of which feature young immigrant protagonists.
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4. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Religious Intolerance:** When people are not respected or are mistreated because of their religion or beliefs.
 - **Immigration:** The process of moving from one country to live in another.
 - **Refugee:** A person who has left their home country because it is not safe for them to stay.
 - **Asylum Seeker:** A person seeking protection in another country because of danger in their home country.
 - **Coyotes:** Smugglers who help people cross borders, often illegally and unsafely.
 - **Detention Center:** A facility where immigrants are held while they wait to be processed or released.
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5. Discussion Questions for Parents and Teachers

- Why do you think Simi's family had to leave their home in India?
- How does the journey to the U.S. change Simi and her mother?
- What did Simi learn about kindness and community throughout her journey?

VERSION TWO:

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- What did Simi learn about kindness and community throughout her journey?

This resource section is designed to help you learn more about the themes in *The Freedom Seeker* and give you ideas for making a positive impact in your community. Whether it's through understanding

the struggles of others, showing kindness, or standing up for what's right, you have the power to make a difference.